

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT

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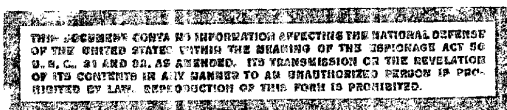
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Under the direct control and supervision of the Soviet Army High Command, the USSR is engaged in the training of cadre formations of a future German Army, to be at the beck and call of the Kremlin. Consequently, the time schedule governing the readying of the effectives of the HVA for combat, the current and eventual combat potential of these effectives as determined by material and morale factors, and - most important - the strategic concept underlying their development into effective combat units, may be viewed as a gauge of Soviet capabilities and intentions in Western Europe. With this thought in mind, a ranking staff officer of the HVA, eminently qualified to assess the above-mentioned factors, was asked to present his own views on what Soviet-instigated remilitarization of Eastern Germany portends. In evaluating the findings of this report, allowance should be made for the fact that they were arrived at by inductive reasoning and that they had to be based on certain speculative assumptions regarding the political objectives of the USSR, e.g., that the USSR is bent upon subjugating Western Europe by the tested method of aggression by proxy.

1. The HVA, as it exists in March 1951 and for the duration of the current training period which is scheduled to terminate by the end of October 1951, has as its sole objective the training of commissioned and non-commissioned cadres. The avowed goal of its training establishments, schools and Bereitschaften, is to train officers and non-commissioned officers, who by the end of 1951 are expected to be sufficiently experienced to exercise military functions corresponding to their rank. The schools and Bereitschaften of the year 1951 are thus distinguished from their predecessor organizations mainly in that they have been given a new structure which, as will be discussed later in this report, constitutes a transition phase from strictly basic training to tactical deployment.
2. Lacking the necessary training in tactical formations, the Bereitschaften are not as yet ready for tactical commitment on short notice. In other words, given a rapidly deteriorating international situation pointing to the imminence of hostilities, the Bereitschaften today and for some time to come for all intents and purposes may be ruled out as a factor which would materially augment USSR capabilities. One absolute prerequisite for tactical commitment, viz joint

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training of the various arms, is totally lacking. While the shortcomings mentioned preclude independent attack operations, it should be borne in mind that HVA effectiveness could in an emergency be called upon to quell civil unrest, as long as the tactical tasks involved did not go beyond defensive and containing action.

3. The HVA has been given the task of forming the nucleus of a future German Army. The contention that this German Army is meant to serve as a spearhead of Soviet aggression against Western Germany can be supported neither by statements attributable to responsible functionaries nor by facts. The official line, rigidly adhered to, is that the People's Police serves strictly defensive purposes, designed to ward off all threats to the social attainments of the DDR. The dogma that this threat emanates primarily from predatory American imperialism is an essential element in the indoctrination of young HVA personnel. The ideological basis, Lenin's theory of just and unjust war, is of course taught in Polit-Kultur classes. Thus Lenin's countenancing of aggressive action for a just cause becomes part of the ideological equipment of HVA personnel. Therefore, the resort to aggression by the HVA at any time in the future would not necessarily cause a deterioration in combat morale, as long as the charge can be made to stick that American imperialism is threatening to impose its yoke upon the "free" citizens of the DDR.
4. There are some stray indications that the Soviet control element is now concerning itself with the corporate combat capabilities of the individual Bereitschaften. This could indicate that the Bereitschaften are no longer solely considered as training establishments, but that an attempt is being made to inculcate in them an esprit de corps conducive to good performance under combat conditions. For example, General Petrakovsky's staff has included in an oral questionnaire a request to include in the HVA progress reports an estimate of the relative quality of each Bereitschaft. The Operations section under Chefinspekteur Helmut Borufka, as a member of his staff expressed it, wants to know which Bereitschaften could be relied upon in a sudden crisis. This can be construed as an indication that the Operations Section, the actual mission of which is shrouded in mystery, is concerned with contingencies necessitating a premature commitment of the Bereitschaften. There is no factual evidence available, however, that actual operational plans have been drawn up for such contingencies.
5. The far from satisfactory morale situation in the Bereitschaften is a cause of concern among HVA staff officers. The HVA has to contend particularly with a morale problem among the old-timers, whereas the new recruits drawn almost exclusively from the ranks of the FDJ have injected a stabilizing element into the Bereitschaften. This is giving rise to the hope that their enthusiasm and devotion to duty will in the long run cancel out the faltering morale prevailing, especially in the non-commissioned ranks. Among the latter, those who attended the 1950 training course without receiving a commission, are dissatisfied. The majority of them have not been assigned to cadre functions, but again form part of the trainee body. A great number who attended schools without receiving commissions are now forced to serve under their schoolmates, not all of whom got their commissions on the strength of superior performance. There have been several instances of non-commissioned officers beating up young officers with whom they went to school. As a matter of record, all Bereitschaften without exception have reported that the officers who received their commissions in October/November 1950 are very poor material. Another cause for complaint is that the non-commissioned officers who have returned to the ranks have to share dormitories with the enlisted men. In some instances as many as 24 have been herded together in shacks with one 40-watt light bulb, where they have to prepare their lessons for the following day. As a result, there has been a continuous stream of instances of disobedience and other disciplinary infractions (absence without leave, violations of guard instructions, etc.), the majority of which keep occurring among the old-timers.

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The blame for the poor morale conditions in the Bereitschaften can also be laid at the doorstep of the cadre section of the HVA which has failed dismally in its assignment policy. In particular during the big January re-shuffle of personnel, the transfer of individuals to regions in which they are not at home has resulted in a great deal of dissatisfaction among the personnel affected. Statistical data are supported by the impressions brought back by inspection teams, summed up in the statement: "To think that they have already had one year training fills one with dismay." The consensus of opinion is that, without exception, under prevailing morale conditions the Bereitschaften would collapse under combat conditions.

6. The average soldier has not as yet formed a very clear conception of the kind of enemy he is going to face in case of conflict, or of the issues that will be involved. Polit/Kultur indoctrination keeps harping on the remilitarization of Western Germany. The HVA is answering this threat by increasing its strength. Naturally, indoctrination meets more resistance among the older classes, especially those not subjected to indoctrination in the USSR, than among the FDJ recruits. In the long run, the preponderance of the younger elements, supported by an incessant Polit/Kultur barrage, is bound to overcome the non-conformist fringe. Once that has been accomplished, the thought of Germans fighting Germans which today may seriously affect the combat morale of HVA effectives, will have been stripped of its fratricidal connotations. The hatred against American imperialism which the Polit/Kultur functionaries engender among their wards will have borne fruit to such an extent that their will to fight will not be weakened by the mere substitution of German mercenaries serving American imperialism. This, however, foreshadows future developments and any assessment of the current morale situation cannot ignore the fact that the very thought of being committed in combat makes the majority of the young HVA soldiers shrink back.
7. All reports alleging concerted recruitment drives refer to the filling up of vacant T/O slots. The drives are thus designed to fill up the ranks, but do not constitute an attempt to increase to any extent the effective strength of the HVA units. All discharges on the basis of Directive 2 (relatives in the West, Allied imprisonment, etc.) have been completed. No sizeable discharge of personnel is in the offing. By the end of 1951, however, an undetermined number of HVA personnel will have completed their contractual term of three years' service. Before then Polit/Kultur will initiate a drive to prevail on the personnel involved to extend their terms. That this has not as yet been done has led to some criticisms of Polit/Kultur.
8. It can be stated with assurance that no increase of the T/O is being planned before completion of the 1951 training schedule. No machinery has been set up to cope with the selection and screening involved in sizeable recruitment. Given the existing housing conditions, a levée en masse has to be ruled out completely. Only if the Soviet Army should decide to vacate the premises it now occupies could a large-scale increase of HVA effectives be considered.
9. in case of hostilities (assuming that the HVA by that time has been fully organized along tactical lines) HVA units (divisions and below) will be assigned independent tactical missions. Conversely, it appears unlikely that they will be integrated into Soviet units of comparable size. Nor will they be relegated to auxiliary tasks, such as the protection of supply lines or the pacification of rear areas. German units up to division level will operate independently with the sole qualification that in all likelihood Soviet military advisers will be assigned to their staffs.
10. Unofficially and only on HVA staff level, Bereitschaften are being referred to as regiments. It is generally agreed, however, that they are nuclear divisions and that, in the not-too-distant future, they will be expanded into full-strength divisions. They already form the skeleton cadre of a Soviet-type division: Their three infantry Kommandos will be expanded to infantry regiments. The fifth Abteilung of each Kommando will form the regimental artillery. The Sonderabteilungen will grow into

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reconnaissance battalions, signal battalions, engineer battalions, tank destroyer battalions, AA battalions, armored battalions, etc.

11. The tactical training being given to officers - certainly to HVA staff officers, but presumably also to student officers in Kochstedt - is based on the assumption that one day the HVA will face the United States Army in combat. Sandbox exercises are governed by so-called Lehrgliederungen, i.e., imaginary tactical organizations facing each other over the sandtable. Significantly enough, the Reds (i.e., friendly forces) fight in tactical units which, for reasons of secrecy, bear no resemblance to Soviet-type tactical units. The Blues (i.e., hostile forces), however, are clearly patterned after the U.S. model. In solving tactical problems alleged weaknesses in American tactics are being exploited: e.g., the direct subordination of armored units to infantry regiments, according to HVA doctrine, precludes a concentration of strong armored forces in the sector where the main effort is to be launched (schwerpunktmässige Zusammenfassung).
12. On the assumption that the analysis of current developments, excluding a major expansion of personnel during the year 1951, is correct, one can expect the building up of cadres with raw recruits to full strength not sooner than the beginning of 1952 (the last two months of 1951 will be taken up with examinations and Christmas leave). Again assuming that all Bereitschaften are up to division strength by 1 January 1952, the following tentative estimate of progress is possible: During the first six months of 1952, formal basic training of the individual rifleman would be completed. This would be followed by three months (until 30 September 1952) of training within the smallest tactical unit (company, battery, etc.) of the branch concerned. The following three months (until 31 December 1952) would be taken up with unit training, stressing tactical cooperation between the various branches. Thus, after a training period of twelve months, effectives would be adequately trained to permit tactical commitment, in division strength, without, however, having created elite outfits. (eine Elite-Angriffs Division). A shortening of the period necessary to weld the division into a combat unit, by drawing on available pools of semi-trained personnel such as regular police constabulary or border police personnel, should be discounted, since such personnel is unlikely to exceed the raw recruit's rate of progress except for target practice. There are no indications that preparatory training on a paramilitary basis is being given in youth or similar organizations outside the HVA.
13. The belief that the Soviet Military Administration, in deference to the current four-power exchanges and in order to give its peace propaganda a semblance of reality, has decided to slacken the rate of progress of its remilitarization program in Eastern Germany, is not borne out by facts. There is nothing at this stage that could be done in order to accomplish a material speed-up of the execution of this program. There is also nothing that is being left undone to push it forward to its goal. It should not be ruled out, however, that the delay in getting the next USSR training program under way, has been prompted by political considerations. (The officers selected to go to the USSR have been waiting ever since their first scheduled date of departure at the end of December 1950).
14. If the above estimate of the length of time needed to bring the cadres up to division strength and train them to the point of readiness for combat is correct, then the critical date - end of 1952 - must be assumed to fit squarely into the Soviet blueprint for conquest. Source points out that the very existence of a German Army in Eastern Germany should convince us of the fallaciousness of the notion that the Soviets have necessarily embraced the concept of conquering Western Europe by force of Russian arms. In case of an outright conflagration, twenty-four German divisions, as a mere adjunct to the Soviet land armies, are unlikely to tip the scales. For the purpose of limited

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aggression under the guise of a liberation crusade, however, such a military force may, as Korea has shown, play a decisive role without getting the armed might of the USSR directly involved.

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the Soviet design for absorbing Western Germany requires the commitment of a German Army, because only by this means can the Soviets avoid starting a third World War. (Even the existence of a West German Army may not necessarily prove to be a deterrent, although it is bound to put a serious crimp into Soviet plans. Once the Polit/Kultur indoctrination processes have borne fruit, the prospect of fighting Germans will no longer affect detrimentally the combat morale of East German troops, whereas the same consideration may decisively sap the West German will to fight). As a corollary, the state of training of HVA effectives may furnish us with an accurate indication of the Soviet time schedule; in this regard the qualification ought to be made that Soviet planning must necessarily rest on the assumption that they will retain their freedom of action, in other words, that their long-range plans will not be interfered with by some "irrational" American act, like the enforcing of a premature showdown. If, therefore, the Soviets have their own way, aggressive Soviet moves directed against Western Germany need not be feared prior to the beginning of 1953.

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Comment:

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Soviet passion for secrecy has never been given fuller rein than in the exercise of control over the affairs of the HVA. Up to this date there is no written document of Soviet origin in existence which could be adduced in evidence to support the fact that they are behind East German remilitarisation. To express opinions of the type reproduced in this report, even among a small circle of trusted collaborators, would be considered treason in the HVA. All questions pertaining to the Why and How of the HVA fall within the purview of the Polit/Kultur apparatus which has a few pat answers and slogans ready. Questions that really strike at the root of this complex are never dealt with openly, presumably because answering them honestly would be tantamount to a confession of aggressive intent.

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